



February 3, 2004

Investment advisor admits defrauding clients

Tomma Botelho, of West Warwick, has pleaded guilty to federal mail fraud charges, admitting that she defrauded two clients for whom she was an investment advisor. Botelho, who is also known as Tomma Grimshaw, was a vice-president of Richard C. Young & Co., Ltd, when she defrauded an 85-year old man and the estate of a deceased woman by withdrawing – or attempting to withdraw – about \$168,000 of their investments and converting them for her own use.

The Office of the United States Attorney announced the guilty plea, which Botelho entered yesterday before U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith in U.S. District Court, Providence. Botelho, 31, of 27 Juniper Drive, West Warwick, is free on bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for April.

At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard W. Rose said that, had the case gone to trial, the government would have proven that, between 2001 and July 2003, Botelho used her position as an investment advisor to fraudulently request withdrawal of clients' funds. She diverted the funds to her own personal accounts at various financial institutions and used the money for her own purposes, including the purchase of a Jaguar automobile.

In this manner, Botelho managed to obtain \$37,000 belonging to an 85-year old client and attempted to obtain an additional \$75,000 belonging to him. Botelho also fraudulently obtained \$30,000 from the estate of a deceased woman. The total intended loss attributed to Botelho's scheme is \$168,688.24.

Botelho pleaded guilty to two counts of mail fraud. The statutory maximum penalty is 20 years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the amount of gain or loss, whichever is greater.

Botelho's exact sentencing will be determined on the basis of federal sentencing guidelines, which take into account such factors as the specific nature and impact of an offense and a defendant's criminal background, if any.

The **United States Postal Inspection Service** investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Rose is prosecuting it.

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